

CIA 1-04 Tofte, Helms
 Strickland, Clear
 Mollenhoff, Clear
 CIA 1-01 Helms

Tofte Threatens to Expose CIA Blunders

IOWAN KNOWS TOP SECRETS OF U. S. SPIES

Letter to Mason City Friend Revealed

By Clark Mollenhoff
 (Of The Register's Washington Bureau)
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WASHINGTON, D. C. — Hans V. Tofte, a star CIA operative, indicates he has inside information about the Bay of Pigs, the Dominican Republic and Vietnamese operations that could create "embarrassing issues" for the big spy agency and for CIA Director Richard Helms.

In a letter to Charles E. Strickland, a friend from Mason City and Clear Lake, Ia., Tofte revealed that this analysis of the disaster of the Bay of Pigs and serious blunders in the Dominican Republic and Viet Nam were among papers seized at his home July 24 by CIA security officers.

Critical Analyses

In a letter to Strickland, Tofte indicated the CIA security



HANS V.
TOFTE

CHARLES E.
STRICKLAND

raid on his home might have been motivated by a desire to seize the highly critical analyses.

In the three-page letter, the 55-year-old former Mason City businessman outlined his differences with high agency officials since 1961, when he was outspoken in his criticism of certain of his superiors.

Tofte is paid \$25,000 a year and holds the Civil Service rank of GS 16. He is one of a mere handful of persons in the spy agency who has intimate knowledge of almost all CIA activities in recent years. He has been involved in undercover work for more than 25 years.

The Register learned Thursday that Tofte had written Strickland asking that he inform friends of the circumstances of his controversy with the CIA. He indicated he hopes to force an expose and a clean-up of top personnel at the CIA, and anticipates a difficult and bitter fight.

Strickland is retired president of the Peoples Gas & Electric Co. in Mason City.

"All I ask is for my true friends to trust me all the way to the bitter end," Tofte wrote. Most of the letter represented an attack on CIA director Helms, and carried the implication that Helms was one of "those who planned and executed the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion, who are still there 'in bigger and better jobs.'"

Tofte said that certain unnamed CIA officials "tried to railroad me out of the agency" in 1961, but failed.

He said CIA director Allen Dulles had lost control of the agency at the time of the Bay of Pigs.

He praised President Kennedy's appointment of John McCone to head the CIA. He did not mention Helms directly, but was critical of the selection of a CIA professional to head the agency.

Tofte revealed that he was at a secret meeting at the White House during the Kennedy administration, during which he warned of the efforts of professional CIA men to hide their blunders in connection with the Bay of Pigs.

He said he told unidentified White House personnel at that time, "The worst mistake the President of the United States could possibly make would be to put a CIA professional in the top spot of the agency."

He suggested that his friends in Mason City read the book, "The Invisible Government" to gain some impression of what he is up against.

He said the authors of the book, Tom Ross and David Wise, were harassed by the agency. He said his own wife, Marlys, has been subjected to surveillance in recent weeks.

"The day this behind-the-scenes setup, working under the protection of official secrecy, becomes strong enough by escaping rigorous congressional controls, we will have the beginnings of a police state in America.

"It could be terribly misused by a ruthless politician in the White House before Congress and the American people even knew it," Tofte said in his letter.

Urges Tight Control

Tofte said he does not agree completely with Senator J. W. Fulbright about the problems of the CIA, but feels that a tight congressional scrutiny of its operations is essential.

"I know what I am talking about and the agency knows that I know it," Tofte said.

At no point in the letter did he state that he would make all of the "embarrassing" information public, but the entire letter carried the implication that he will, in his own time.

The text of the letter follows:

"Mr. Chas. E. Strickland

"Mason City

"Iowa

"Dear Charles:

"Many thanks for your swift support in regard to the letter of introduction to Senator Hick-enlooper. I shall make use of it as appropriate.

"In order to understand what I am really involved in, I would recommend that you read a book titled 'The Invisible Government' very carefully. CIA did everything possible to squelch the publication of that book.

"The authors and their families were attacked ruthlessly, in fact, the entire professional machinery went into action to destroy and discredit them and ruin their position in society and their home life.

"However, the so called 'invisible government' was not yet quite strong enough to accomplish it.

"The day this behind-the-scenes setup, working under the protection of official secrecy, becomes strong enough by escaping rigorous congressional controls, we will have the beginnings of a police state in America.

Continued

"It could be terribly misused by a ruthless politician in the White House before Congress and the American people knew it.

"With 'one of us' at the helm of CIA (pardon the pun), acting as a stooge of the powers-that-be, the stage is set for developments that would have our founding fathers rotating in their graves.

"I am no Fulbright man. In fact, I am no politician at all. I'm not for anything, I'm against something: Timidity and inefficiency. However, I do agree with Fulbright that the agency has to be watched very carefully, only, Fulbright's ideas of 'watching' would not even begin to do the job!!! Not by a long shot.

"Believe me, I know what I am talking about . . . and the agency knows that I know it. The papers they found in my house represent years of study aimed at perfecting a plan, that would revolutionize the entire CIA and make it do the work, it is supposed to do—better, more professionally, and without a colossal waste in regard to money and human tragedy.

"The latter refers to the untold 'little people' — agents and their bamboozled families — that go down the drain during inefficient and callous operations without anyone lifting a finger. Like the Cuban exiles, that were murdered at the 'Bay of Pigs.'

"Was there a clean-up inside CIA after the 'Bay of Pigs'? Not on your life. The same people, who planned and executed that disastrous affair are still sitting in Langley in bigger and better jobs. I do not envy them those jobs, I just think that other men should be in them.

"As to my own ambitions, I can only say that once during a secret meeting at the White House early in the Kennedy administration, I was jokingly asked 'whether I wanted to be director of CIA?'

No Joke

"Already then I replied, that this was no joke. Not only would I flatly refuse such an offer. I would feel free to say, that the worst mistake any President of the United States could possibly make would be to put a CIA professional in the top spot of the agency!

"Dulles had lost control at the time of the 'Bay of Pigs.' I was vastly relieved, when I was named as appointee to replace McCone. (Again, read the 'Invisible Government,' chapter No. 13, 'The Secret Elite.')

"After my vigorous protest against the operation, that became the 'Bay of Pigs' — and many other old professionals protested with the voice of the turtle—they tried to railroad me out of the agency every which way.

"But I happened to be un-railroadable. I signed my life away, so to speak, just to remain in the agency to study, and teach, and work for improvement against all odds.

"The hierarchy thought it had me cornered and rendered harmless, when I was transferred to the training department.

"Little did they realize, that this gave me precisely the privacy and extra time, I needed to learn everything and complete my studies for the preparation of a plan, that would benefit the next generation of CIA men . . . and perhaps contribute to sweeping improvement.

"I emphasize contribute, because no one man can have the whole answer. All he can do is try to contribute. I had to do most of this in my spare time; at home, nights, weekends, and holidays.

"So, in my house, the other day, they found volumes of book manuscript and many secret reference papers of all kinds that apparently represented 'inside' and knowledgeable criticism of the 'Bay of Pigs,' the Dominican Republic, Viet Nam, and a host of other 'embarrassing' issues.

"They also found a master plan that was designed to prevent these things and save millions of dollars of unnecessary expenditure via enhanced efficiency — starting with improving the quality and performance of our people.

"I think, they suspected all this and that the 'raid' of Sunday two weeks ago was deliberately staged. Unfortunately someone over-reached and took Marlys' jewelry in the process. This I cannot prove, but if anyone has a better theory, I would like to hear it.

"So, as the agency perpetrated an illegal entry into my home, accompanied by 'grand

larceny' (according to my lawyers), and tried to muzzle myself and the Metropolitan Police one thing no one had expected: I came out in the open and challenged the entire outfit to a public showdown.

"This is what it is really all about. Marlys is already under surveillance, and I do not underestimate the forces and facilities I am up against, because I know what was tried against the authors of the 'Invisible Government.' They could not get them, because they were members in good standing of the free press of America.

"Naturally the top men in CIA suspect that I have other papers somewhere. It is well known now, that I keep meticulous diaries and private records in connection with the above mentioned work for over-all improvement.

"I could go on and on. But the above is sufficient as to an indication of the issues at stake. I cannot help what is about to happen now. All I can ask is for my true friends to trust me all the way to the bitter end.

"Greetings to all mutual friends out west and kindest personal greetings to you and your family.

"Faithfully,

"/s/ Hans

"Hans V. Tofte"